
Inflection

Inflection: the change in the form of a word to show a grammatical change such as tense, mood, gender, or number.¹

Microsoft defines inflection in this way (*but who needs Microsoft to tell us anything?*)

Inflection is a fancy word that tells us that words change depending upon how they are used in a sentence. This is true more so in Latin but does happen in our own language as well.

Changes in Number

English:	Bob washes the dog. Bob washes the dogs.
Latin:	Quintus canem lavat. Quintus canes lavat.

In both examples we see that the words have changed to reflect the number (from singular to plural) of the direct object. "Dog" becomes "dogs" and "*canem*" becomes "*canes*."

Changes in Tense (verb)

English:	Bob washes the dog. Bob washed the dog.
Latin:	Quintus canem lavat. Quintus canem lavit.

Here, the examples show an inflection of the verbs in each, having gone from the present tense to the perfect tense (past).

Changes in Mood (verb)

English:	Bob washes the dog. Bob may wash the dog.
Latin:	Quintus canem lavat. Quintus canem lavet.

Lastly the verbs in each example have been inflected to show the mood of the verb (indicative to subjunctive).

Inflection, again, is simply the term used to say that words change depending upon how they're used in a sentence.

¹ Encarta® World English Dictionary © 1999 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Developed for Microsoft by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.